

COURTIN' A WIDDER

By GEORGE A. HARRIS

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"Yes, cousin Deb, there is no use talkin' I've seen more bad luck than any man livin' and it does seem some times as if the Lord or the Old Boy—I dunno which—had a pertickler spite agin me, and took delight in pilin' on the whacks! Who would ever have s'posed a big, noble lookin' woman like Blindy would have dropped off right in the dead of winter when my rheumatiz and lumbago, and ashmy and brownish, always rage the wint' kind? O, dear! what shall I do?" and Ebenezer Pert, a little wizened man, with pale watery blue eyes, and scattering wisps of yellow hair, barked his nose in the depths of a gingham handkerchief a yard square, and groaned dismally.

"Do," responded cousin Deb. "Why, spunk up and put the best foot forward. A widderer of your age with nine children on his hands has got to hustle. You can't lay round and eat and sleep and smoke old cob pipes same as you always have done."

"I never disputed Job's troubles," snifled Ebenezer, and he flourished the gingham handkerchief spasmodically. "Never—he had 'em like me—but his comforters was angels compared to mine. 'Twould melt a heart of stone to see the way I'm fixed. But my sufferin's air about over—I shall never climb winter hill—I feel it in my bones. I ain't had a decent thing to eat since poor Blindy died, nothin' but dough cakes and slops, and my stomach is all out of kilter. Poor Blindy! what a treasure I've lost! so patient, so clever, so patient!"

"Look here, Ebenezer, I've advised and advised, but what it amounts to is, if there is anything I despise it is a sniveling man that has got no grit. You've got to face facts, Blindy's gone, you've lost your breadwinner, and all your howlin' won't bring her back," and Deb, flashed a glance at her elderly relative which was far from sympathetic.

"I know it, Deb," he whimpered, "but my poor heart is buried in her grave. Nobody knows my feelin's but myself. I shall never find another to take her place—not if I live to be as old as Methuselah! She took all the care of the critters and the milkin', and the barn and the house, and the young uns, and if—"

"H! broke in Deb sharply, "you don't stop your wailin' I'll leave this house inside of twenty minutes, bag and baggage. I've heard it just as long as I'm a goner to—I have been here two months and you've not made the least effort to get a housekeeper."

"I'd like to know who I'm goner to?" queried Ebenezer, and he eyed her warily through his fingers.

"Well, there is plenty of widders. I heard Elder Tridder say there was twenty-seven drawin' pinholes out of the government, right in this neighborhood."

"Well," said Ebenezer in a resigned tone, "it's pretty cold weather for a man of my years to start out lookin' up widders, but I s'pose it's got to be done. Do you think of any pertickler one you can recommend?"

"Well, let me think—there is Miss Holden, she's as smart as a steel trap."

"Yes, but I won't have her, she is homelier than a hedge fence."

"Miss Davis is a pretty good cook, but she is slow."

"I won't have her neither, she is crosser lookin' than butter-milk, and would jar on my feelin's."

"How about Miss Brown, she is very capable."

"I don't want her. I couldn't relish her grub. She's got false teeth, and I watched her handlin' 'em down to the donation, when she thought nobody was watchin'."

"How would Nancy Green do?"

"Nancy Green!" and he opened his little eyes in horror. "Cousin Deb, what air you crazy? A woman that's been divorced from three livin' hus-

ried old Jumper jest after I married Blindy and things has always gone kind of skewy for us both. Poor little Janie, she was an awful pooty girl, red cheeks and black eyes, and shaped just like a weasle. I snum Deb, how I would like to see her and git to talkin' over old times! Who knows but I can coax her to keep house for me awhile; and then—um—um—" and he poked his cousin's ribs significantly.

"That's the way to talk, Ebenezer. I think she would come over and jump at the chance. All you lack is a suit. Why can't you ride over to Durham tonight—strike while the iron is hot you know."

"Sartin Deb, sartin!" and he sprang to his feet with a suddenness which fairly took away her breath. "Just hunt me up a paper collar, and grease my best boots, and don't forget a clean handkerchief in case I should shed tears. I s'pect the neighbors will say it's airy for me to go courtin' widders, but what they say don't put short cake in my mouth, or mend the holes in my stockin's. No s'ee—" and he snapped his fingers—"Let 'em cackle!"

"The widow Jumper's kitchen was as cozy and comfortable as fresh paint and paper, cretonne covered furniture, and gay home made rugs could make it. A cheerful log fire blazed in the



"I snum, Janie, if this don't seem like old times!"

old fashioned fireplace, and Janie was in the act of lighting the evening lamps when there came a loud rap-rap-rap at the door.

"It's only me—Miss Jumper," answered a faint voice from outside. "Don't you remember Ebenezer Pert?"

"Well I guess I do!" and she threw the door wide open letting a stream of warmth and light upon the shivering figure on the doorstep.

"I am so glad to see you, Mr. Pert!" and she clasped his numb fingers effusively. "Let me take your overcoat and muffler, you must be nearly frozen! Now set up to the fire and give your poor feet a good toastin'. Have you been to supper—no—well then let me git you some and a cup of hot tea—shant I?"

"O, yes, Mr. Pert, such sad news always travels fast. But you must try and reconcile yourself to the ways of providence."

"I try to marm—but it's pesky hard!" and he began to ransack his pockets in quest of a handkerchief. "Losin' Blindy was a terrible blow!"

"It must have been, Mr. Pert," and the widow rubbed her nose with a corner of her white apron sympathetically. "But I can feel for you—dear friend—I have lost two beloved companions."

"But four, marm—think of four—three of 'em as likely females as ever stirred a haddock—the other—to my sorrow—was a weak vessel, who forsook a loving husband for a sewing-machine man—but she got her come-uppance. O, marm—I've been called to wade through seas of trouble—yes seas!"

"I know you have, poor girl, but you must try and bear up—it is the only way. I don't suppose you have much appetite, but do set down and force yourself to eat a few mouthfuls anyway. Here is cold chicken and lemon tapioea cream, and boiled cabbage and canned string beans, and a two quart jug of old cherry cider—drink every drop—do now—it will do your soul good."

Solemnly, and as though he was performing a sacred duty, Ebenezer proceeded to manipulate his knife and fork, and when the plump chicken was reduced to bones and the tapioea cream had vanished from sight, when every fragment of cabbage and canned string beans had disappeared from the platter, and the last drop of old cherry cider had gurgled slowly down his throat, he leaned back in his chair and smiled upon the widow with moist eyes.

"I believe I never see livelier chicken than yours, Miss Jumper! rooster or pullet?"

"Rooster."

"I snum Janie if this don't seem like old times, come over here and set down side of me, I want to have a long talk with you."

"In just a minute, Mr. Pert."

"O, now Janie," and his face took on an injured look. "Don't call me

Mr. Pert. It used to be 'Ebby' once, don't you remember?"

"Ye-es-s?"

"I've thought of you all these years Janie, I have I swan—I never see anyone I loved half as well as I did you. P'haps you don't believe it but its the truth. Now things has worked our way s'pos'n we jine conditions. Say, Janie, will you hev me?"

"O-O-O-My-My-My—"

"Say 'Yes,' Janie."

"Yes, Ebby."

ADDED TO HIS DIGNITY.

Newly-Elected Congressman Conscious of the Honor.

He was a large man and his bosom swelled with pride as he stepped up to the desk and registered. It was evident that he knew he was a man of distinction.

The clerk glanced at the name and was puzzled.

"Haven't you stopped with us before, Mr. Barker?" asked the clerk.

"Dozens of times," answered the large man; "a most important change."

"You always registered before as 'John Barker,' and now you have it 'H. J. Barker,'"

"Of course, of course," returned the large man. "I guess you haven't heard from my district or you wouldn't worry about that. I've been elected to Congress."

"Oh," said the clerk, puzzled.

"That gives me another initial, doesn't it?"

"I don't quite see—"

"What a thundering lot of ignorance some of you city people have. That makes me Honorable John Barker, doesn't it? And that's H. J. Barker for short, ain't it?"

THE USES OF TURPENTINE.

A Very Valuable Article to Have Around the House.

Turpentine, either in resinous form or in spirits, has a household value. A child suffering with the croup or any throat or lung difficulty will be quickly relieved by inhaling the vapor and having the chest rubbed until the skin is red, and then being wrapped about with flannel moistened with hery spirits. Afterward sweet oil will save the skin from irritation, says the Woman's Home Companion. In the case of burns and scalds turpentine has no equal. It is the best dressing for patent leather; it will remove paint from artists' clothes and workmen's garments; it will drive away moths if a few drops are put in closets and chests; it will persuade mice to find other quarters if a little is poured into the mouse holes; one tablespoonful added to the water in which linens are boiled will make the goods wonderfully white; a few drops will prevent starch from sticking; mixed with beeswax it makes the best floor polish, and mixed with sweet oil it is unrivaled as a polish for furniture—the latter mixture should be two parts of sweet oil to one part of turpentine. Some physicians recommend spirits of turpentine, applied externally, for lumbago and rheumatism. It is also prescribed for neuralgia of the face.

DRIVEN OUT BY BOLL WEEVIL.

Alarming Ravages of the Pest in the Southern States.

One of the most serious and damaging results of the invasion of Texas by the Mexican boll weevil is made public for the first time by ex-Senator A. H. Carter of Fort Worth, who states that many thousands of South Texas farmers are leaving the state and locating elsewhere, because of the devastation wrought in their localities by these pests, says the St. Louis Globe Democrat. He says that possibly 50,000 people, all told, will go to New Mexico, Oklahoma and Indian Territory, particularly to the two last countries, and that he knows of many people who have already left the state. Not only are the boll weevils ruining the south part of the state, but they are being discovered in other sections. A farmer living in this county has recently found the pest about five miles north from this city. The question, Senator Carter says, is the most serious one that the people of not only Texas, but the entire cotton-growing sections of the South, have to contend with since Texas was admitted into the Union.

The Open Sky.

Underneath the open sky I would let the world go by. Every shred of harassing Lapping with the swallow's wing; Every scrap from cat's gray loom Vanishing amid the bloom; Every tinge of regret Fading like the mists that fret Height and hollow, ere the morn In the Orient is born; Every grief, old or new, Soothed by God's unchanging blue. And the hush-song of the rill In the shadow of the hill, Where the beech boughs whisper so Tender, lovingly, and low; Every doubt dispelled and blowna By the airs as kind as creep Through the lilled fields of sleep; Every fear transmitted To the dew, as primy as the dew, And the old earth-jay again Bleeding soul and heart and brain; Underneath the open sky I would let the world go by! —Clinton Scollard in *Anslee's*.

Afterthoughts.

"It frequently occurs," said the member of Congress, "that the most important part of a woman's letter is the postscript."

"Yes," answered his wife, "and I have been informed that quite frequently the most important thing about a bill is the amendment."

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY.

"And it was the custom of Mrs. Washington to spend the day preparing for the tea which was served in the early evening."—Life of Washington, Martha Custis Washington.

Martha Custis Washington, Back in colonial days, Did you bake and brew and find much to do, In a thousand wifely ways?

And, when fields were drift with snow, In the winter of the year, Did you catch each shy rift of stray sunshine, And fill the house with good cheer?

Martha Custis Washington, Were you an amiable wife, In those mystic old days was he—to you—The dear object of your life?

What did his birthday mean to you, O woman of honored name, Did you know that some day the whole round world Would ring with his well won fame?

Or was he to you just a loving mate—One who would care for you, And listen to all your confidences, Over the birthday cake.

Martha Custis Washington, Back from the shadows come, And tell us the ways of those glad old days, The songs we have left unsung.

Show us your home—the tender side—A guest to your fireside take, And tell us about that happiest hour, Over the birthday cake.

Though first to lead, in war and peace, He was first in the home, I say, And so, in the home let us think of him, As we keep his natal day. —Augusta Prescott.

LIFE AT MOUNT VERNON

Washington's Beautiful Home

To Mount Vernon, historically the most interesting place on our continent to the patriotic American, a tide of pilgrims from all over the world continues to flock each year. Over 100,000 visitors have tried the experiment of a seat in one particular chair in the mansion, and the register shows many thousands callers annually. A favorite occupation of patriotic pilgrims, as they wander through the mansion and over the grounds, is to imagine how life went on here in Washington's time.

The rooms, so empty and silent now, used to re-echo with much stately merry-making; and diversions, too, of a lighter sort, for Washington was fond of having young people around him at Mount Vernon, and he loved to see them happy. He sometimes sought to enter into the amusements of his beloved adopted daughter, beautiful Nelly Custis, his wife's orphan grandchild; and rather deplored the fact that his presence acted somewhat as a restraint upon her lively companions. He used to go into the garden and gather roses himself for Nelly. On Washington's birthday, 1799, Nelly Custis was married to his favorite nephew, Lawrence Lewis. That was a grand day at Mount Vernon!

Ceremonious observance was not so strict at Mount Vernon as in the executive mansion at New York and Philadelphia; yet here, as elsewhere, that dignity which was inseparable from Washington's character and manner, inspired all who came in contact with him. Our first President did not inaugurate the practice of greeting callers at a reception with a handshake. Yes, he was as charming a host as he was great as a soldier and a statesman, and his gracious wife was a fitting helpmate in rendering guests happy and comfortable. A lawn party at Mount Vernon must have been a most delightful function. One can see, in fancy, the fine ladies and gentlemen walking about in the flower garden and admiring the sage-palm, the lemon trees and the century plant, which had come from the West Indies and which were kept in big tubs, that could be moved into the hothouse in winter. Washington took great interest in his garden and lawn. Many of the trees he had set out himself before he



Tea at Mount Vernon.

brought Martha Washington as a bride to Mount Vernon, and he loved to lead his guests about and show how his planting had thrived.

Could one in fancy repeople the grounds and mansion with the distinguished company that used to gather here, what a quaint and pleasing picture it would be! Soldierly Count Rochambeau and eloquent Marquis de Chastellux and their suites; noble and courtly Lafayette; the young Spaniard, Marquis D'Yrujo (who gave his heart to the fair Philadelphia, Sally McKean), and—more than all these to us—our own Franklin, Jefferson and Hamilton, and illustrious revolutionary generals beyond the naming, would move through the historic rooms and over the grounds, while music from Nelly Custis' harpsichord would float through the open windows. And the private soldier and the neighboring poor would be here too. Washington

wrote from a revolutionary battlefield to the manager of his estate: "Let the hospitality of the house with respect to the poor be kept up. Let no one go away hungry. If any of this people



The Washington Family. (From a Famous Painting.) should be in want of corn, supply their necessities."—Christian Herald.

HAS A VALUABLE RELIC.

Balustrade Behind Which Washington Took Oath of Office.

The recurrence of Washington's birthday recalls some interesting points, and its observance by a dinner at the old Morris house was highly appropriate. This storied mansion will gradually drop the Jumel name and also its associations, while those of the Morris family will resume their importance. It was built by Col. Morris of the British army, who married Mary Phillips, Washington's first love. Morris acquired the Phillips manor by this marriage and built this lordly dwelling for a manor house. The property was confiscated during the Revolution, and Washington made it his headquarters during the darkest time of the great conflict. After election to the Presidency he drove out to the old house in his state carriage accompanied by a few friends and reviewed those scenes of painful interest.

One of the most recently discovered memorials is the balustrade behind which Washington stood when he took the oath of office, and which is now preserved in the Historical society. The discovery of this relic was made by myself, and if the reader will pardon a brief introduction of the first person, I will tell how it was done.

Some years ago I frequently visited Bellevue hospital, being acquainted with one of its medical staff. I noticed at that time resting against the wall in the hall a large stone slab on which, as I was informed, Washington stood during the inauguration. When the statue of Washington was subsequently erected at the sub-treasury in Wall street this stone was used as its base, but how or why such a relic should ever have been stored in Bellevue hospital was a question not easily solved. Eventually I learned that the demolition of Federal hall and the purchase of the Bellevue property occurred at nearly the same time, and hence all available materials were removed to the latter, where they were used in the charity buildings.

After my surgeon friend left the hospital my interest was continued by my occasional visits to the adjacent morgue, and at one of these visits my attention was casually attracted by the large veranda near the hospital porch. Looking at it closely I noticed a strange difference in workmanship, for while most was comparatively modern, in the centre the style was rude and primitive, and took the shape of a balustrade. The latter on closer examination was composed of thirteen bars, each end being marked by a balustrade, and the whole was so different in style from the other work that they evidently could not have belonged to the same age. Then I recalled the slab which I had once seen in the hall, and the chain of immediate thought convinced me that I was gazing on the old balustrade of Federal hall. The builder of the veranda had utilized it as a matter of economy and had escaped detection, but I reported my discovery to the Historical society, which lost no time in securing this valuable relic.—New York letter to *Troy Times*.

Observances of the Day.

One hundred and seventy-one years ago, Feb. 22, George Washington, the first president of the United States, was born at Wakefield, Westmoreland county, Virginia. As early as 1781 the soldiers of the patriot army and the allied French forces celebrated his birthday in elaborate fashion. Gen. Washington then had his headquarters at Newburg and wrote Count de Rochambeau as follows:

"The flattering distinction paid to the anniversary of my birthday is an honor for which I dare not attempt to express my gratitude; I confide in your excellency's sensibility to interpret my feelings for this and for the obliging manner in which you are pleased to announce it."

In 1790 the Society of the Cincinnati gave a public celebration in Philadelphia in his honor. They marched through the streets and to the executive mansion where they paid their respects to the president-general. Six years later a motion was made in congress to adjourn in honor of Washington's birthday. The motion was lost by disaffected members, who made a plea of bad precedent. When this became known about the town a large crowd gathered which made so much noise that congress had to adjourn and the precedent was set.

GA at Promises for Electricity. Prof. Mason of the Smithsonian Institution, says that the most needed achievement of 1903 is the discovery of a satisfactory method of economizing electricity. Some day, he says, in the not distant future the rivers will make all the electricity we want. We shall harness the streams and they will heat every house, run every wheel and light every lamp.

When Guests are Expected. In preparing a room for a guest, if only for a few days, do not neglect to place a variety of books at his disposal, says the Washington Star. If there is no bookshelf in the room, books and magazines should be placed on a low table near the window. Many a visitor has gone through tortured, sleepless nights in a strange house, with not a line of reading matter to be got at.

Unearth Body of Abbot. Recent excavations on the site of St. Augustine's abbey, Canterbury, Kent, England, have brought to light the leaden coffin and coffin plate of Abbot Ulric I. (985-1006), and the body of another abbot wrapped in silk vestments, much decayed, with pieces of copper gilt clasps. Numerous fragments of carved marble, brightly painted stones, gilded pinnacles and figureheads have also been unearthed.

A Painful Marriage Custom. The penalty among the Hottentots for widows who marry again is a somewhat severe one. It is the rule among these people that, before so marrying, a widow must cut off the joint of a finger and present it to her new husband on the wedding day.

New Cure for Lame Back. Rutledge, Minn., Feb. 16th.—Mr. E. C. Getchell of this place relates a happy experience which will be read with interest by all those who have a similar trouble.

It appears that last winter Mr. Getchell was seized with a lameness and soreness in his back which grew worse and worse till at last it became very bad and made it very difficult for him to get about at all.

After a time he heard of a new remedy for backache which some of his friends and neighbors said had cured them, and he determined to try it. The name of the remedy is Dodd's Kidney Pills and Mr. Getchell has proven that it is a sure cure. He says:

"I used two boxes of Dodd's Kidney Pills according to directions, and my lame back was entirely cured and I am all O. K. again. Dodd's Kidney Pills are as good as represented."

This remedy is very popular here, and has worked some remarkable cures of Backache and Kidney Trouble.

Many a woman's prematurely gray hairs can be traced to marriage with a man whom she proposes to reform.

Bathing the Baby. Young mothers naturally feel anxious about the baby's bath. It is best to begin at six weeks to put the little one in water, first folding a soft towel in the bottom of the basin. Use only Ivory Soap, as many of the highly colored and perfumed soaps are very injurious to the tender skin of an infant. E. T. Parker.

The more you loaf, the more likely you are to have bad habits.

THE K. C. S. ALMANAC FOR 1903.

The Kansas City Southern Railway's Almanac for 1903 is now ready for distribution. Farmers, stock-raisers, fruit-growers, truck gardeners, manufacturers, merchants and others seeking a new field of action for a new home at the very lowest prices, can obtain reliable information concerning Southwestern Missouri, the Cherokee and Choctaw Nations in the Indian Territory, Western Arkansas, Eastern Texas, Northwestern Louisiana and the Coast country, and of the business opportunities offered therein. Write for a copy of the K. C. S. Almanac and address, S. G. Warner, G. P. A., K. C. S. Ry., Kansas City, Mo.

But few men exhibit their bravery until after the danger is past.

\$100 Reward Given. The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages, and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, setting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of Testimonials. Address F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by druggists. Hall's Family Pills are the best.

Love is blind, especially the blind known as self-love.

THE BEST RESULTS IN STARCHING can be obtained only by using Defiance Starch, besides getting 4 oz. more for same money—no cooking required.

The truth would seem less brutal if people were better acquainted with it.

Defiance Starch is put up 16 ounces in a package, 10 cents. One-third more starch for same money.

There never was an ugly girl in the world—ask her.

California—Low Rates.

Beginning February 15th, the M., K. & T. Ry. will sell Colonist Tickets to California at very low rates, viz.: St. Louis, \$30.00; Kansas City, \$25.00. Tourist Car through to San Francisco leaves St. Louis each Tuesday at 8:33 p. m. Ask any Katy Agent or address James Barker, Gen'l Pass Agent, M. K. & T. Ry., 202 Wainwright Building, St. Louis.

The people who are looking for trouble generally want it sugar-coated.

DO YOUR CLOTHES LOOK YELLOW? If so, use Red Cross Ball Blue. It will make them white as snow. 3 oz. package 5 cents.

Be absolutely honest, and you will be very disagreeable.